

# NXT – May 11, 2016: This Is How They Do It

## NXT

Date: May 11, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

Finn Balor is back tonight and it's already time for him to go after his NXT Title again. Balor lost the belt a few weeks back at a house show to new champion Samoa Joe, meaning Finn's target should be obvious. Other than that it's time to really hit the gas on building towards the next Takeover which is scheduled for about a month from now. Let's get to it.

We open with a video on Finn Balor, talking about how the title is his obsession before the loss to Joe. I believe this aired last week as well. Balor may have lost the title but it's time to embrace the demon inside.

Here's Finn to open things up. After a THANK YOU FINN chant, Balor thanks the fans and talks about how the matches with Joe could have gone either way but he won the first two. Before he can talk about what happened in the third match, Elias Samson comes out to sing about Balor's masquerade being exposed. Samson says Finn is nothing without the title so Balor kicks him in the head to put Elias outside. The guitar goes flying but thankfully Samson makes the save. Jeff Jarrett is somewhere groaning at the guitar not being destroyed.

Last week, Eric Young called himself a world class maniac who is so glad to finally be here in NXT.

Balor wants Samson tonight.

## American Alpha vs. Corey Hollis/John Skyler

Non-title. Chad takes Skyler to the mat to start and we get the Kurt Angle themed chant. Hollis comes in and gets headlocked down as well before we hit the seated armbar. It's off to Jordan who easily throws

Hollis into the air for a face first crash onto the mat. A double hiptoss puts Hollis down and there's a double dropkick for Skyler as this is completely one sided so far.

Hollis finally realizes that he can cheat and the jobbers take over on Gable for the first time. Skyler drops a knee for two and we hit the chinlock. That works for all of five seconds before it's off to Jordan as house is cleaned. Cue the Revival on the ramp for a distraction but Grand Amplitude puts Hollis away at 5:10.

**Rating:** C-. This was a nearly complete squash and that's all it needed to be. Alpha is so far ahead of everyone else right now that it wouldn't make sense to have them do anything but squash other teams. Revival vs. Alpha II should be a really solid brawl though and it would help to have something like No DQ involved. A regular match would be fine too though.

Shinsuke Nakamura is asked what he thinks about Alex Riley's rage. Nakamura starts shaking, like he has rage you see.

#### Alex Riley vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Riley had been calling himself the white lion down in NXT, at least until he got released a few weeks after this. Riley goes right after him to start like he's a guy about to be released going after one of the top stars in the promotion. Nakamura misses a knee though and Riley hammers away, earning himself a string of knees and forearms to the ribs and face. The running knee in the corner sets up the inverted exploder suplex, followed by Kinshasa to put Riley away at 2:38.

Austin Aries is in William Regal's office to say he wants to prove he's the best. Blake and Murphy come in to talk about being disrespected. Aries: "You don't even have the decency to bring Alexa Bliss with you?" Bliss comes in and yelling ensues so Regal makes Blake/Murphy vs. Aries/a partner of his choice next week. Aries pulls out his phone and implies he knows someone.

#### Alexa Bliss vs. Rachel Ellering

That would be Paul's daughter. Bliss starts on the arm by bouncing it off

the mat and working on an armbar. A forearm gets two on Rachel and it's back to the armbar. The comeback goes nowhere as Bliss does the psycho eyes choke to set up the Sparkle Splash for the pin at 3:52.

**Rating:** D. They're doing a good job of setting up Bliss as the midcard heel though I can't imagine her ever being a real threat to someone like Asuka. Ellering was really just there and didn't show anything outside of being competent in the ring. Then again that's been the case several times before, but she's a long way behind Tessa Blanchard in terms of potential.

Bayley says she's getting ready for her rematch when Nia Jax interrupts. She learned from the loss to Bayley but it's clear that Bayley has learned nothing from losing the title. A challenge for a rematch is issued and Bayley says she can choke Nia out again. This was a really awkward, and likely WAY too scripted, exchange.

Bayley vs. Nia is official for next week.

#### Finn Balor vs. Elias Samson

Just regular Finn here and his shoulder is taped up. Feeling out process to start until Balor knocks him to the floor and takes us to a break. Back with Balor holding an armbar and the fans saying it NEEDS MORE COWBELL. Samson fires off some forearms but Balor just blasts him in the face a few times. Some running chops in the corner put Samson on the floor for a baseball slide. The Sling Blade sets up 1916 for the pin on Samson at 7:47.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine and did exactly what it was supposed to do. In theory this sets up another Balor vs. Joe match but I'm really not needing to see them fight for a third time out of four total major matchups. This is also where Samson is a good player. He's not going to be a top heel anytime soon but those songs are enough to get the fans hating him every week and then he can take a beating and make someone else look good. That's an important role to have and Samson is as good of an option as they have for it at the moment.

Balor says he wants his rematch for the title because it belongs to him.

Now he's possessed like a demon stalking his prey so here's Samoa Joe to interrupt. Before it can get physical, Regal comes out to make Balor vs. Joe III for Takeover on June 8. That's really rare for NXT as they almost never have feuds go on this long. Joe yells a lot so Balor dives over the top to take him out.

**Overall Rating:** C+. They're finally starting to set up some stuff for the next Takeover, which is a good thing even though I'm not wild on the main event they're going with. However, this was a step up over last week's show and they're setting up some stuff for the future, which is where NXT shines best. Aries' partner could be interesting and you don't know what they might pull off for that.

### Results

American Alpha b. Corey Hollis/John Skyler – Grand Amplitude to Hollis

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Alex Riley – Kinshasa

Alexa Bliss b. Rachel Ellering – Sparkle Splash

Finn Balor b. Elias Samson – 1916

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# NXT – May 4, 2016: Grumble Grumble

## NXT

Date: May 4, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're back at Full Sail this week and things should be getting interesting again in a hurry. The next Takeover has been scheduled for June 8 so they only have about a month to get wherever we're heading. Samoa Joe is the new NXT Champion and tonight we may find out who he's facing next. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Joe to get things going. The new champ calls himself a man who keeps his word and this title win was inevitable. If anyone has a problem with that, they can come out here and get choked out. Cue the debuting Eric Young (grumble grumble) to a very nice reception from the crowd. Young says the only thing you can count on in life is change and now it's time for him to collect another of those titles. Joe leaves without any violence and says Eric doesn't belong in the same ring as him.

### Tessa Blanchard vs. Nia Jax

Nia throws her around a bit and drops the leg for the pin at 1:09. I think we have Asuka's first challenger.

### Tye Dillinger vs. Austin Aries

Dillinger shoulders him down and shows Aries a 10 to start but Aries comes back with some armdrags into an armbar. We get the BOTH THESE GUYS chant as Dillinger starts in on the back with a few stomps and a hard whip into the corner for two. Aries claps his hands around Tye's ears before sending him outside for the corkscrew dive. Tye raises a boot to block a dropkick and gets two off a fireman's carry slam onto his knee.

That's fine with Austin as he forearm smashes Tye in the face and hits a 450 for the pin at 4:37.

**Rating:** B-. They've got something in Dillinger but he's still doing the same jobbing stuff that he's been doing for what feels like forever now. Of course Aries is awesome and has proven himself time after time. I could easily see him getting the first major title shot at Joe and the match would rock either way.

### Revival vs. Hype Bros

Ryder and Dash get things going and I'll give you two guesses as to who the fans are behind. Zack has to fight both of them off and is quickly pulled into the wrong corner for a tag to Dawson who pounds Ryder down. Dash puts on a cobra clutch as Corey continues his eternal hatred of all things Mojo Rawley by insulting his trunks. The hold is pretty easily broken and Ryder dives over for the hot tag. Mojo cleans a little bit of the house before walking into the Shatter Machine for the pin at 4:12.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to the match here but what were you expecting? It's pretty clear that Revival is going to get the first title shot against American Alpha at the next Takeover so this was more of a foregone conclusion than anything else. That's all the Hype Bros really need to be anyway so this <http://shopantibioticsonline.com> worked fine all around.

Alex Riley isn't worried about Shinsuke Nakamura next week because he's so small. Riley promises to be a maniac next week.

### No Way Jose vs. Noah Potjes

The fans are WAY into Jose with Phillips saying it's contagious. Graves: "So is the flu." Jose dances a lot and mocks swinging a bat. A few armdrags set up the baseball punch and a quick full nelson slam puts Noah away at 2:17.

Aries says that was a perfect 20 but something seems a bit off. He's been flying under the radar since he's been here but that's all about to change. Now if you'll excuse him, he has a banana to eat.

Video on Finn Balor losing the title to Samoa Joe. Balor is back next

week.

### Samoa Joe vs. Eric Young

Non-title. Joe works on the arm to start but they opt to just trade big shots to the face instead. A swinging neckbreaker gets one on Joe but he throws Eric out to the floor for a big suicide dive as we take a break. Back with Young eating a hard elbow to the jaw and the enziguri out of the corner. We hit the nerve hold as this isn't exactly flying off the page so far.

Joe gets two more off a backplash before elbowing Young's head off to stop a comeback bid. Eric does the slide between Joe's legs and scores with a running forearm, followed by the good looking top rope elbow for two. The release Rock Bottom out of the corner plants Eric though and it's the Muscle Buster into the Koquina Clutch for the submission at 14:20.

**Rating:** C-. The match was watchable enough but Young really doesn't have a character outside of "that guy who used to be in TNA." That's really not enough for a debut against a big name with a promo as simple as "I'm here to change things and win the title." Based off how soundly Joe won, I could very easily see this being a one off appearance for Young. There isn't much of a reason for him to stick around and it's not like this was anything special.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was a really flat show with the only good match being Aries vs. Dillinger and that wasn't even great. Balor coming back next week should help a lot though and they'll be able to start setting up Takeover to give the show some fire. This show felt really empty and didn't have anything to off but NXT can turn it on very quickly so there's no reason to be worried.

### Results

Nia Jax b. Tessa Blanchard – Legdrop

Austin Aries b. Tye Dillinger – 450 splash

Revival b. Hype Bros – Shatter Machine to Rawley

No Way Jose b. Noah Potjes – Full nelson slam

Samoa Joe b. Eric Young – Koquina Clutch

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# **NXT – April 20, 2016: All In A Day's Work**

## **NXT**

Date: April 20, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're still down in Texas and it's a big week tonight with Apollo Crews vs. Samoa Joe and American Alpha facing Enzo Amore and Colin Cassady in a non-title match. It should be interesting to see how these now main roster stars are treated on NXT, though there's a good chance that at least one of them wasn't announced for the main roster when this was taped. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. American Alpha



Non-title. Before the match, Cass says he and Enzo have been doing this longer than anyone in NXT history. Tonight they're going to find out if there's just one word to describe them. The fans immediately declare this to be awesome as Gable and Amore get things going. Gable easily takes him to the mat and it's off to Jordan to stay on the arm. The fans think this is wrestling though I could also accept a Bavarian checkers tournament.

Jordan works on a variety of armbars before it's back to Chad for a hammerlock. After at least two minutes of working on Enzo's arm, he dives over for a quick tag to Cass as we take a break. Back with Cass slamming Enzo onto Jordan for two before we hit the chinlock. Gable tags himself in though and snaps off an over the shoulder flip to keep Enzo in trouble. A collision allows the tag to bring in Cass though and Gable actually gets beaten down for a bit longer.

Cass hits a good looking Stinger Splash before working on the arm as well but Gable finally sends him into the corner and makes the tag off to Jordan. That means it's time for the running right hands and the suplexes with Jordan ripping the straps down. Enzo gets sent into the corner for the running shoulder but Cass takes the bullet for him. Jordan puts the straps back up and takes them down again, setting up Grand Amplitude to put Enzo away at 13:30.

**Rating:** B-. Another good match from two teams who do little over than have good matches. Enzo and Cass have turned into one of the biggest surprises as far as in ring abilities go and it was cool to see them in one last big match before they left. Alpha is just so far ahead of everyone else though that I'm not sure who they could conceivably lose the titles to.

Apollo Crews is ready for Samoa Joe because he doesn't like bullies.

#### No Way Jose vs. Alexander Wolf

Jose likes to dance a lot but Graves is much more concerned about why Jose is always being denied entrance into various places. Alexander gets caught in an airplane spin and a legdrop gets two, but he's up with a chinlock on Jose because it was just a legdrop and it's not 1987. Some baseball swings to the chest sets up a baseball style punch (as in he

winds up for a pitch and punches the guy in the face) for the pin on Alexander at 2:59. Jose is fun but I really don't see him lasting more than a few months without some big adjustments.

Austin Aries says he wasn't lucky at Takeover and if Baron Corbin wants to fight him again, he's not a hard man to find. There's a lot of A-level talent in NXT but there's only one man at the A-Double level.

Elias Samson is playing guitar when William Regal comes in to say Samson will be facing Shinsuke Nakamura soon.

#### Nia Jax vs. Deonna Purrazzo

Nia doesn't waste time and grabs a shoulder breaker to start. A big elbow drop sets up a Samoan drop and the big leg ends Deonna at 1:35.

Bayley thinks Asuka will beat Eva Marie next week but she'll be watching.

#### Apollo Crews vs. Samoa Joe

Fans: "PLEASE DON'T LEAVE!" I'm not sure who that's directed at but it could apply to either. Feeling out process to start as Joe can't quite get anywhere with his wristlock. Instead Apollo grabs a headlock as we actually get some NXT house show ads with the announcers saying Joe gets a title shot at a show in Massachusetts. I don't think I've ever heard them do that before. Joe comes back with the snap jabs but Crews snaps off a great looking dropkick.

We take a break and come back with Joe hitting a big chop, followed by the corner enziguri. A hard running elbow drops Crews again and it's off to the neck crank. Joe gets two more off the backplash but gets caught in a snap suplex to give Apollo a breather. The running clothesline and really quick nipup set up Crews' jumping enziguri but the standing moonsault gets two. Crews can't quite get Joe up for the lifting powerbomb though and the Rock Bottom out of the corner plants Apollo. For some reason this draws a loud NXT chant, followed by the Koquina Clutch to make Crews tap at 13:33.

**Rating:** B-. This was a hard hitting back and forth match with Crews being an interesting opponent for Joe. Balor is the kind of guy who can get by

Joe with pure skill but Crews is someone who can match the power, requiring Joe to just beat Crews even harder for the win. Fun stuff here and a good TV main event.

**Overall Rating:** B+. Two big matches that both worked, matches set up for next week and a debut. I'm really not sure what else you could ask for in a show that ran forty seven minutes without commercials. It's going to be interesting when we get out of Dallas and see what's coming up but of course NXT is capable of setting up a few things like the idea of Balor vs. Joe/Nakamura or Bayley/Jax vs. Asuka. Any combination could be entertaining and it's not clear who it's going to be, which gives you a reason to come back. Really efficient show here and that's all you should expect from something like this.

### Results

American Alpha b. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady – Grand Amplitude to Amore

No Way Jose b. Alexander Wolf – Baseball punch

Nia Jax b. Deonna Purrazzo – Legdrop

Samoa Joe b. Apollo Crews – Koquina Clutch

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# NXT – April 13, 2016: They've Still Got It

## NXT

Date: April 13, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're back to normal now after Takeover: Dallas but we'll be seeing some the action from Wrestlemania Axxess where about four weeks of shows were taped. This is going to include some TV debuts and potentially the fallout from the big show, though there's a good chance a lot of that will be included in backstage segments. Let's get to it.

Commissioner William Regal runs down some of tonight's big events, including Shinsuke Nakamura's TV debut.

Opening sequence.

The camera is a little different here as the hard camera is opposite the entrance. Other than that it looks like a regular setup, despite Axxess taking place just a few feet away.

### Austin Aries vs. Angelo Dawkins

The fans are behind Aries here of course. Dawkins quickly takes off his headband but gets taken to the mat and ridden a bit. A hard shoulder puts the much smaller Aries down but he snaps off some armdrags to take over. Dawkins throws him down and stomps away before slapping on a front facelock. This sets up a lot of yelling about Dawkins' Island, the meaning of which I'm sure will be covered later. Back up and Dawkins misses a charge in the corner, allowing Aries to start in with those hard forearms. The neckbreaker over the middle rope sets up a roaring elbow for the pin on Dawkins at 4:15.

**Rating:** C-. Standard debut here and there's nothing wrong with that. Aries looked fine here and beat up a jobber that we've seen before,

though none of that really matters as we're still waiting to see his next big match. Given that Corbin is gone, maybe he could challenge Balor as there's no point in seeing Balor vs. Joe III.

Samoa Joe says nothing has changed and now he wants Apollo Crews next week.

No Way Jose is coming next week.

#### Alexa Bliss vs. Tessa Blanchard

Tessa is of course the daughter of Tully. Bliss takes her down to the mat to start but gets kned in the face for two. Back up and Alexa drops her again, allowing Bliss to stand on her back for Graves calls a Tony Hawk. We hit the cravate for a bit before Bliss loads up a slap. Tessa blocks it though and shouts I DON'T THINK SO in a Stephanie style screech. Alexa is done with this though and grabs Blanchard by the throat while giving us the best crazy eyes I've seen since Edge retired. A shove Tessa down and a standing moonsault into knees to the chest gives Alexa the pin at 3:52.

**Rating:** C+. Bliss' best match ever and a lot of it is due to those eyes. I know she gets a lot of compliments for her looks but that was one of the best visuals I've seen in a very long time. At the same time though, Tessa clearly has that it factor and knows what she's doing in the ring. Give her some experience and a bit of a character and she's ready to be one of the top women in NXT. Really nice surprise here and I'm very pleased.

Finn Balor is ready for any challenger as the new #1 contender. He'll be sticking around for Nakamura's in ring debut. That's really the only option right now but it still seems a little soon.

#### Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano vs. Vaudevillains

Gargano armdrags Gotch into an armbar to start before it's quickly off to Ciampa who takes English's head off for two. Everything breaks down for a bit and Gargano gets double teamed on the floor to give the Vaudevillains their first real advantage. Gotch works on the arm and tags in English,

who comes in between the bottom and middle rope. I've never seen a male wrestler come in that way unless he was injured.

Gargano knees Gotch off the apron and quickly crawls over to Tommaso for the hot tag. A hanging downward spiral (think Randy Orton) gets two on English but Gotch makes a blind tag to come in. The rollup doesn't work though and the flip over armbar makes Simon tap at 5:03 in a big upset.

**Rating:** C+. This picked up near the end but above that it was a big surprise. You really don't expect a main roster team (and they were acknowledged as such) to lose to a team that hasn't had a ton of success even in NXT. Still though, well done on a clean win and maybe Ciampa and Gargano are going to be the next challengers.

Tye Dillinger says Nakamura is great but tonight Nakamura is competing against him, not the other way around. Tonight Nakamura is being sent back to Japan. Dillinger leaves but comes back to give interviewer Rich Brennan a 3.

#### Baron Corbin vs. Tucker Knight

Corbin takes him into the corner for some right hands to start but Knight gets in a nice dropkick and a Thesz press. Back up and End of Days puts Knight away at 1:57. Nothing to see here.

American Alpha stood in the empty convention center wearing their new titles earlier today when Enzo and Cass showed up to praise the new champions. They'd also like a match, which doesn't even need to be for the titles. Jordan and Gable seem to agree with the idea.

#### Bayley vs. Liv Morgan

Wristlocks are exchanged to start as the fans sing the HEY WE WANT SOME BAYLEY song. Morgan does a Matrix move to avoid a clothesline, only to get elbowed in the back. The fans think Bayley is going to hug her but Morgan grabs an ankle scissors to take over. A bulldog sets up a monkey flip, only to have Bayley counter a whip into the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 3:24.

**Rating:** C-. Just a quick match to get Bayley back on her feet but Morgan

looked good out there at the same time. It's clear that they're planting the seeds for the next batch of women and with Sara Del Ray coaching them, there's little doubt that they'll all work out. Remember how nothing Bayley and Sasha were back in the day and then look at where they were just a year or so later.

Post match Bayley says she was beaten by a better woman but the fans make her want to keep standing and be champion again.

### Tye Dillinger vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

The chants are almost split to start but Nakamura's fans cut off Tye's with a HE'S ELEVEN chant. Tye armdrags him down and holds up the ten fingers, which fascinate Nakamura for some reason. He even asks the referee about it but Tye tells him to bring it, which you just don't do to this guy. Back up and Nakamura takes him to the ropes before casually putting his head on Tye's chest. That gets a ten from Shinsuke and an offer to bring it.

The fans already say it's awesome and while I get the sentiment, could you save that for more than two minutes into a glorified squash? Tye gets two off a good looking superkick and we hit the chinlock. Graves has to mock the fans for failing to chant ELEVEN in rhythm as Shinsuke starts his comeback. We get the kicks to the chest and head, including the shaking stomp in the corner. The Kinshasa puts Dillinger away at 5:14.

**Rating:** C. Dillinger is a great example of someone who has skills and talent but is rarely ever going to win a big match. However, as soon as you get the TEN thing going, everyone forgets about that because he's got enough charisma to carry him wherever he needs to go, even if that's normally to a loss. I don't think Nakamura needs much more explanation.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was back to basics for NXT and that's what they do best. It was a night of quick/nothing matches but we got some storyline advancement and potential matches set up for down the road. It also helps that they announced two matches for next week (American Alpha vs. Enzo/Cass and Joe vs. Crews) to give us something to look forward to. As usual, NXT knows how to book week to week and sets the standard for doing so.

## Results

Austin Aries b. Angelo Dawkins – Roaring elbow

Alexa Bliss b. Tessa Blanchard – Moonsault knees to the chest

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Vaudevillains – Flip over armbar to Gotch

Baron Corbin b. Tucker Knight – End of Days

Bayley b. Liv Morgan – Bayley to Belly

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Tye Dillinger – Kinshasa

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# **NXT – April 6, 2016: A Rare Disappointment**

## **NXT**

Date: April 6, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips



This is the first of a series of special shows from Wrestlemania weekend with most of the matches taped from Axxess weekend. It should be interesting to see how things go with a very different style audience. Also it's not clear whether or not we'll get much advancement in the major angles as everything needs to reset after Takeover: Dallas. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Takeover as you might guess.

Phillips and Graves welcome us, clearly from Takeover.

New correspondent Catherine Kelly tells us what we can expect, including Apollo Crews vs. Elias Samson, which was a dark match at Takeover.

We see a video on American Alpha winning the Tag Team Titles, followed by Jordan (nearly in tears) and Gable talking about what it means to win the titles on the biggest weekend of the year.

Video on Asuka winning the Women's Title from Bayley.

Bayley says congratulations to Asuka and admits that Asuka is just on another level. A champion is made by how many times they get back up and get better so she'll rise to the occasion again.

We recap Elias Samson getting pinned by Johnny Gargano a few weeks back. Post match Samson beat him down until Apollo Crews made the save.

Recap video of Aries vs. Corbin.

Aries calls himself the most polarizing man in wrestling and that's just fine. He's not out there to prove anything to the people though because he's out there to prove something to himself. Talent and passion can't be measured with a ruler and a scale but he proved everything he needed to prove to Baron Corbin and isn't going anywhere soon.

We see Finn Balor retaining the NXT Title over Samoa Joe.

Balor says he escaped and survived Joe again.

Joe has nothing to say.

We see Samson singing a song to Crews but backing away from a fight.

No Way Jose is coming.

### Elias Samson vs. Apollo Crews

Samson comes out with his guitar and has something to say but we have a lot of booing to get through first. The fans say that they want wrestling but thankfully Crews cuts it off to get things going. Crews throws him into the corner to start so Samson hides behind the guitar. A headlock doesn't get Elias anywhere and it's an armbar to put him on the mat. The armbar even goes to the floor so they head back inside for yet another armbar.

Back from a break with Samson getting in a shot to the back of the head and putting on a chinlock. Another chinlock doesn't go anywhere and it's Crews getting up and hammering away to a surprisingly strong reaction. Samson bails to the floor and gets taken down with an apron moonsault, only to have the standing version hit knees back inside. Elias gets in a jumping knee to the head but asks for silence, allowing Apollo to kick him in the face. The toss powerbomb puts Samson away at 14:46.

**Rating:** D. This really wasn't very good and that's probably it for Samson for a little while. Crews moving to Raw is still a surprise but at least he went out on a win unlike Corbin. Unfortunately it wasn't a good match as most of it was spent on armbars and chinlocks. Samson is much more of a character than a wrestler but I'm not sure how far he can get on that alone.

Video on Zayn vs. Nakamura.

Sami can't put all of his emotions into words.

Nakamura says strong style has arrived.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This is a tricky one as the show should have been white hot coming off Wrestlemania weekend and the awesome Takeover but instead it's a recap and dark match. Maybe you can argue that this is a breather from all the action and a fear of burnout but I was looking forward to something entertaining here and wound up seeing a bunch of

stuff all over again. It's not often that I get to say this but I was disappointed here.

## Results

Apollo Crews b. Elias Samson – Toss powerbomb

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# **NXT Takeover: Dallas: Night of a Thousand Chants**

## **NXT Takeover: Dallas**

Date: April 1, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're back with another NXT pay per view style special and one heck of a stacked card. The main event here is Samoa Joe challenging NXT Champion Finn Balor in a rematch from their match of the year candidate from London. Other than that we have Sami Zayn's potential farewell match for the promotion against the debuting Shinsuke Nakamura in what should be a near classic. Let's get to it.

Of note: I was in the arena for this show so this is my second time seeing it.

Apollo Crews vs. Elias Samson was scheduled for the show but was bumped to a dark match due to time constraints. I'd assume it will air on TV at a later date.

The opening video focuses on the history of Texas wrestling before talking about how this is the future. The two title matches and Zayn vs. Nakamura receive the focus.

### Tag Team Titles: American Alpha vs. Revival

Alpha (Chad Gable/Jason Jordan) is challenging. There isn't much of a story here other than Alpha has beaten all the other teams to earn a shot. Gable starts with Scott Dawson (of Dawson/Dash Wilder) and the fans do the GABLE chant in tune with Kurt Angle's old cheers. That quickly changes to "WHICH ONE'S DAWSON, WHICH ONE'S DASH", which makes sense as they're about as interchangeable as the Usos.

Gable takes him down with some headlock takeovers but Dawson keeps countering with headscissors. A rollup gets two for Chad as the sequence earns a nice round of applause. Chad gives him a gentle pat on the cheek and everything is about to break down. More armdrags have Dawson in trouble and it's off to Jordan who gets a chant of his own. The evil champs get a breather with a rake of the eyes, only to have Alpha backdrop them both as this is one sided so far.

Chad comes back in to work on the arm as things slow back down. Gable gets two off a cross body out of the corner but misses a dropkick. As usual I'm not sure why that miss hurts but the one that connected didn't. Jordan comes in for some stereo German suplexes and it feels like I'm watching the Steiners vs. the Brain Busters. To continue with that theory, Wilder comes in off a tag and gets Chad to chase him into a clothesline from Dawson to take over for the first time.

Now we get to the Revival's bread and butter of cutting the ring off and working on body parts like a good old school team would do. Dawson puts on a Gory Stretch but gets countered into a sunset flip for two. A double

DDT drops the champs but Wilder crawls under the ring and nails Jordan to break up the hot tag. That hooligan.

In the (unfortunately) memorable part of the match, Dash loads up a powerbomb for a clothesline from Dawson but can't keep Gable up, basically making it a slow motion Dominator with the clothesline missing completely. It's only two though as Wilder isn't legal, meaning it's back to Dawson as the fans chant BOTCHAMANIA and remind the champs that they screwed up.

Chad FINALLY crawls through Dawson's legs and makes the white hot tag to Jordan for some serious house cleaning. A string of suplexes gets two on the champs but Scott gets a quick rollup for two with Wilder using a towel to hold his partner's feet on the ropes like a classic heel. I'd love to see more of that kind of stuff. An uppercut gets two on Jordan with Gable making the diving save for a SWEET false finish.

Jason misses a charge into the corner but Gable makes a blind tag to come in. Some rollups are exchanged for two and Gable gets some more near falls off a small package and a reverse victory roll. Jordan makes a blind tag of his own and runs around the ring to sneak in and spear the heck out of Wilder, setting up Grand Amplitude for the pin and the titles 15:11.

**Rating:** B+. What a match and it really did feel like the Steiner Brothers vs. the Anderson and Blanchard. That's the kind of a pairing you never expect to see again in this generation but these two really did get close to pulling it off. Like so much in NXT, the Revival was talented but just ran into a team more evolved than they were. Alpha is one of the most polished acts I've ever seen given how long they've been together. I know Gable gets the hype (as he should) but Jordan is an amazing talent in his own right with some amazing athleticism and technical abilities.

Jim Ross and Michelle Beadle are shown.

Kota Ibushi is here for a BIG reaction from the crowd.

Ad for the NXT UK tour.

We recap Austin Aries vs. Baron Corbin, which is all about Aries debuting and getting attacked by Corbin, who was mad over losing the #1 contenders triple threat match. Aries is out for revenge.

### Austin Aries vs. Baron Corbin

Corbin whips him into the corner to start but gets forearmed in the head a few times for his efforts. A discus forearm puts Corbin on the floor and Aries nails a top rope ax handle for good measure. The announcers talk about Aries breaking up a 600+ day Samoa Joe title reign, which is as close as you'll get to an acknowledgment of Ring of Honor around here.

Back in and Corbin finally realizes he's a lot stronger than Aries and shoves him down to the mat. A whip sends Aries shoulder first into the post for two and things slow way down. We hit the nerve hold with Corbin shouting that Aries is a little man from nowhere. Not quite the Great Gatsby but close enough. Corbin lets go of the hold and gets two before telling the timekeeper to ring the bell. There's something awesome about someone who just yells at everyone else because he knows no one can touch him.

Aries comes back with some left hands and a neckbreaker across the middle rope for a cool spot. A missile dropkick followed by a running corner dropkick put Corbin on the floor for a suicide dive, which of course draws an NXT chant. Aries tries another charge but runs into Deep Six on the floor for a huge crash. For some reason the referee counts one twice so Aries dives back in at eleven. It must be getting the leftover Ring of Honor out of him. Back in and Aries says bring it so Corbin tries End of Days, only to have Austin roll over into a cradle for the pin at 10:43.

**Rating:** C. I really don't like this ending and the match felt a bit off. Aries didn't get in a ton of offense and then he wins on a quick rollup. I'd assume this was designed to set up a rematch but it's really not the best debut. The idea made enough sense but it's not the version I would have gone with. You can have Corbin take a loss here and not really have it damage him as he can just lay people out to make up for it later. I don't hate this but it didn't do much for me.

Balor arrived earlier in a Star Wars shirt.

We recap Sami Zayn vs. Shinsuke Nakamura. There's nothing personal here but Zayn made his debut with a big win over Cesaro years ago so now Nakamura wants to win a big match in his own debut. It's pretty clear that Sami is heading for the main roster after this one so they're likely going for a big moment here. We also get a video on Nakamura, whose introduction was basically "Yeah you all know him and you know he's awesome.". Why go with anything other than the obvious?

Scott Hall and X-Pac are here.

### Sami Zayn vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

The fans sing along with Sami's music for a cool moment. As big as Sami's pop is though, Nakamura's chant and reaction are just that much bigger. The place seemed to be in awe of him and his spastic dancing, even doing their holy swearing chants during the entrances. They circle each other a bit and the fans chant YES in advance of contact. Sami ducks the kick to the head but Nakamura tells him to bring it.

Back up and Sami cranks on the arm as the fans are totally split. Now we get my new favorite NXT chant of "BOTH THESE GUYS!" That's quite the compliment and not something you often hear. As we hear about Nakamura's Kinshasa knee (Daniel Bryan's running knee), Sami starts throwing him around with armdrags before telling Nakamura to bring it in a nice touch. More knees to the ribs put Sami down and we get a SHINSUKE'S GONNA KILL YOU chant.

There's the first kick to the head and a second gets a one count. Nakamura puts on a front facelock as the director tells Graves to talk. Sami gets in a suplex for two and a big forearm puts Nakamura on the floor. That's not good for Sami as Nakamura gets in two straight knees to the head, followed by a running knee to the ribs for two back inside. Sami is smart enough to make Nakamura miss a charge out to the floor, setting up the big flip dive. The fans again declare this awesome as Sami catches a charge with a Michinoku Driver to put both guys down.

Then in the sequence of the match they slug it out with forearms for at least thirty seconds, drawing a YES chant until it turns into trading forearm bombs. Nakamura's nose is busted and they start speeding up again

to a round of applause. Nakamura gets the better of it with knees to the ribs and a flurry of kicks/stomps to the head to put Sami down. Both guys are gassed though so Sami takes Nakamura's head off with a clothesline.

That just earns Zayn a cross armbreaker which is turned into a triangle but Sami stands up and kicks him in the face for the break. When all else fails, KICK HIM IN THE FACE! Now it's Sami kicking Nakamura down against the ropes, followed by the Koji Clutch in the middle of the ring. Shinsuke turns it into a rollup for two and followed with a quick enziguri. Fans: "FIGHT FOREVER!"

The Helluva Kick misses but so does the Kinshasa, allowing Sami to grab the Blue Thunder Bomb for an awesome near fall. Nakamura rolls to the floor but still gets up a HARD kick to block Sami's diving DDT. Back in again and Sami tries the exploder, only to have Nakamura elbow the heck out of the back of his head. A middle rope knee to the head sets up the Kinshasa for the pin on Sami at 20:07.

**Rating:** A+. And that's your match of the show, weekend and year so far. Just a brutal, brutal fight with two guys hitting each other as hard as they could for twenty minutes until one of them couldn't get up anymore. Nakamura looks like a killer on arrival and Zayn gets to move on to the main roster with a classic on the way out. What more can you possibly ask for out of two guys in a match like this? Outstanding stuff and one of the hardest hitting matches I've seen in a very long time.

Nakamura takes a bow but helps Sami up to chants of "THANK YOU SAMI!" Zayn raises Shinsuke's hand before staying in the ring for a bit in what looks like his goodbye as his music plays one more time. We get one final OLE chant as Sami waves goodbye and looks back. The camera work here makes it much more effective on the broadcast than it was in the arena.

We recap Bayley vs. Asuka. Again it's similar to the Tag Team Title match as Asuka has run through the division and only the champ is left. Simple but effective.

Stephanie McMahon is shown and described as an integral part of the women's division. I'm to the point where I don't even care about this anymore. Stephanie has decided that she invented the division and set it



up so that's the official company line now. Moving on.

### Women's Title: Asuka vs. Bayley

Bayley is defending and both women get enormous reactions. Asuka's entrance sees cherry blossoms fall from the ceiling, which were just bags being emptied out by production staff who could be seen in the rafters. The fans argue over whether Bayley is going to hug Asuka or if Asuka is going to kill Bayley. Feeling out process to start until Bayley eats a right hand to the face to knock her into the corner.

They hit the ropes but miss some running strikes to give us a standoff. The running hip attack puts Bayley down though and the champ is suddenly in trouble. A second hip attack misses though and Bayley gets in a middle rope elbow for two. Asuka can't quite get a Fujiwara armbar as Bayley makes the rope so it's off to some kicks to the ribs instead. A quick hurricanrana sets up Bayley's guillotine choke but Asuka escapes and puts on an ankle lock.

That's reversed as well and Bayley starts forearming her, only to have Asuka scream and dropkick the champ again. Now it's time for some YES kicks, followed by a running knee for two more. Asuka kicks her in the head again as this is getting a little more brutal. Back up and they both try dropkicks, followed by Bayley blocking another dropkick and grabbing a legbar of all things. Asuka gets up so Bayley elbows her in the leg before busting out a dragon screw leg whip.

A quick cross armbreaker has Bayley in trouble and a seated armbar makes it even worse. That's countered into a rollup (because of course) for two but Asuka can't get her namesake lock. Fans: "BOTH THESE WOMEN!" Bayley's armbar doesn't work and unfortunately the Bayley to Belly doesn't either, allowing Asuka to get in a snap belly to belly. The Asuka Lock goes on and Bayley is in trouble, eventually falling down and fighting for a LONG time before passing out in the hold to give Asuka the title at 15:24.

**Rating:** B. The ending felt a little flat here but that's up from feeling very flat live. The match worked and you could get a much better story with the camera showing Bayley getting more and more desperate as she just didn't have what it took to hang with someone as skilled and

seasoned as Asuka. They did a good job of protecting Bayley by having her pass out, but I still don't think Asuka did enough on the arm to set up that hold. The ending makes sense in theory but I still don't like the execution. It's still a good match though.

Post match Asuka looks at the fallen Bayley (now awake and sitting up) but walks away without a handshake or any kind of sportsmanship.

We recap Samoa Joe vs. Finn Balor. Joe already lost to Balor in their first title match back in London but went on to win a VERY long match over Sami Zayn to earn this spot. Since then, Joe has gone on a mini rampage (as is his custom) to set this up.

Bobby Roode is shown in the front row. Now that's a big deal. Well kind of. As big a deal as a TNA guy can really be.

#### NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Finn Balor

Balor, in full demon mode, is defending....and he has a chainsaw. It never ceases to amaze me how he goes from a normal looking guy in a leather jacket to whatever insane monster this is supposed to be (It's awesome but where in the world does this come from?). They slug it out to start with Balor being sent outside, only to come back with right hands to bust Joe WAY open. You really couldn't see the severity of the cut live but there's quite a bit of blood coming down his eye.

Joe throws Balor hard over the barricade so the doctor can look at his eye but then throws the towel away. In an amazing visual, the camera cuts to the barricade where the demon face rises up like he's on an elevator and springboards off the barricade with a forearm. The referee brings the towel in again but Joe throws it away and smacks Balor in the face.

Balor does that hop over the ropes out of the corner (that's always sweet) but Joe knocks him off the apron for one of the hardest suicide elbows I've ever seen. Oh wait though as we have to check the cut again, though to be fair half of Joe's face is bloody here. Again, that wasn't clear from the audience, who swear at the medical staff for not letting them fight. The announcers suggest that the match could be stopped but they finally get the cut closed (as well as they could at least) so Joe

can Rock Bottom Balor out of the corner.

The enziguri gets two on the champ and they stop it AGAIN for the cut. That earns them an F\*\*\* PG chant, followed by the Facewash to Balor in the corner. A running big boot and knee drop get two but Balor dropkicks him down. That means it's time for another medical check and a LET JOE BLEED chant. The champ fires off some chops to send Joe outside, followed by a HARD running kick to the chest.

The Sling Blade connects but Balor misses a dropkick, allowing Joe to hit the backsplash for two. Joe stays on him with the powerbomb into the sequence of submissions, capped off by a Crossface. This caused a Benoit chant in the upper deck which was immediately booed out of the building. So even NXT fans have standards.

The Muscle Buster only gets two and Balor wins another slugout with something like a Pele and it's time for demon mode. The dropkick sets up the Coup de Grace but 1916 is countered into the Clutch, only to have Balor climb the buckles and flip back onto Joe for the pin to retain at 16:22. Joe's stunned look is great as he has no idea what happened to him.

**Rating:** A-. This felt much more like a fight than a match and that's exactly what it needed to feel like. I know a lot of people are going to complain about the referee stoppages but that's the wrestling world we live in now. I really don't have an issue with someone having a bloody eye getting treatment before the cut gets out of hand. Yes it got annoying but after seeing how bad it really was, I more than understand it now.

What I'm not sure of is who the next challenger is going to be. There's no logical reason to do Balor vs. Joe 3 and the only other option would seem to be Nakamura, though it's a bit too soon for that. At least we had a really good match here, though it was a step down from their London match.

Joe stares at Balor to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A. The show was better on a second viewing but it wasn't

a classic by any stretch. I didn't feel much of a flow here as it's really just a collection of matches. That being said, it's a collection of REALLY good matches with the Nakamura vs. Zayn match more than stealing the show. Other than that you have a great opener, an awesome main event and a totally watchable Aries vs. Corbin match that doesn't even last eleven minutes as the worst match of the night. This is what NXT does: set up matches and then blow the doors off when it's time for the show. Great stuff here and an amazing start to the weekend.

## Results

American Alpha b. Revival – Grand Amplitude to Dawson

Austin Aries b. Baron Corbin – Rollup

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Sami Zayn – Kinshasa

Asuka b. Bayley – Asuka Lock

Finn Balor b. Samoa Joe – Balor flipped back onto Joe while in the Koquina Clutch

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# Went To NXT Takeover: Dallas

I'm half dead already so no full live report at the moment (though the full reviews are coming eventually) but here are some quick highlights. 1. American Alpha is so over it's scary.

2. The Aries match ended REALLY fast, almost to the point that I thought Aries was injured.

3. The Zayn vs. Nakamura match woke everyone up like few matches I've ever seen. That was amazing live.

4. "BOTH THESE GUYS" is the best chant they've had in a long time.

5. The ending of the women's title match really didn't work as it just ended out of nowhere. Also Asuka needed to work on the shoulder to set that up.

6. The towel was the biggest heel of the night.

7. This wasn't a great show and is probably in the bottom tier of Takeovers.

8. I was tired at this show so a second viewing might severely change my mind.

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## New Column: NXT Takeover: Dallas Preview

I think the name speaks for itself here.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-nxt-takeover-dallas-prev>

# Impact Wrestling – November 25, 2015: Thank Goodness

## Impact Wrestling

Date: November 25, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

It's the final night of group play as we're finally going to know the final sixteen people who could become the new World Champion. That means the matches almost all have meaning for a change, which should mix things up a good bit. There's no word on what happens after this but the finals should be coming soon. Let's get to it.

We open with the standard recap and preview.

### Group X-Division: DJZ vs. Manik vs. Tigre Uno

This is a playoff after these three tied in points. It's a two fall match with the winner of the first fall getting to leave and then the second winner advancing as well. They all go after each other to start with Tigre sending both guys to the floor and hitting a huge moonsault off the top to take them both out. Back in and Manik and Uno trade arm holds until DJZ comes back in to break it up, only to be sent to the floor. Manik puts Tigre in a Gory Special and adds a reverse Boston crab to DJZ at the same time. Back up and DJZ grabs a quick double DDT to advance to the round of sixteen.

Tigre starts fast with a reverse suplex into a Stunner for two (cool move) but gets caught in a cross armbreaker. That sends Tigre to the ropes so Manik tries a belly to back superplex, only to get elbowed down.

A split legged corkscrew moonsault sends Tigre to the next round at 7:57.

**Rating:** C. This is becoming my standard rating for an X-Division match. It didn't have much time to go anywhere, the high spots were fun and the title meant nothing. I'm really not sure what they see in DJZ going forward after the changes to Manik but why bother with potential when you can go with comedy?

Drew Galloway was in Glasgow and talks about being married to this business because it's all you have time for as a wrestler. This is the longest time he's been home in ten years and he can't wait to come back here with his perfect partner: the World Heavyweight Championship.

#### Group UK: Rockstar Spud vs. Drew Galloway

Feeling out process to start until Drew unleashes the power with a gorilla press. They head outside with Drew sending him back first into the apron, only to miss a charge and go head first into the steps. Drew barely beats the count back in and misses a charge into the post to make things even worse. Some running dropkicks and an enziguri mean it's time for Spud to take off the bowtie. The Underdog is broken up but Drew can't bring himself to take a cheap shot, allowing Spud to grab a jumping DDT for two. Not that it matters as the Claymore (running boot, to the chest in this case) puts Spud away at 7:17.

**Rating:** B-. Better than I was expecting here as Spud has found that perfect formula to make you believe that he could pull off a huge upset like this without it being ridiculous. Galloway is going to make a deep run in this thing and it's cool to see him have to sweat a bit against someone who is fun to watch in Spud. Good match here and better than I was hoping for.

#### Group UK

Drew Galloway – 9 points (0 matches remaining)

Bram – 3 points (1 match remaining)

Rockstar Spud – 3 points (0 matches remaining)

Grado – 0 points (1 match remaining)

#### Group UK: Grado vs. Bram

If Bram wins, he advances to the round of sixteen. If Grado wins, there's a three way playoff with Spud, Bram and Grado later tonight. Grado dances a lot and gets rolled up in four seconds. They had to get seven matches in tonight so this almost had to happen at some point.

#### Group UK

Drew Galloway – 9 points (0 matches remaining)

Bram – 6 points (0 matches remaining)

Rockstar Spud – 3 points (0 matches remaining)

Grado – 0 points (0 matches remaining)

#### Group Future Four: Micah vs. Jesse Godderz

Winner advances. Micah gets sent to the floor to start as Pope talks about getting the job done no matter what he was doing. Well he certainly did a lot of jobs so he's got something there. Back in and Jesse slowly pounds away until Micah makes his comeback to indifference. A Samoan drop puts Jesse down but he avoids a top rope headbutt, setting up the Adonis Crab to advance Jesse at 4:29.

**Rating:** D. Is there a reason Micah has a job? He's generic in the ring, no one cares about him, and I don't remember a single thing about him. Jesse is starting to turn a very weak corner and it's always good to have a heel that you want to see get punched in the face. At least they kept this quick as this group has been death since it started.

#### Group Future Four

Eli Drake – 7 points (0 matches remaining)

Jesse Godderz – 6 points (0 matches remaining)

Micah – 4 points (0 matches remaining)



Crimson – 0 points (0 matches remaining)

Recap of Group Tag Team.

Kurt Angle has been in the UK to hype up the Maximum Impact tour. He officially announced his retirement tour and says his run is over, possibly after this tour.

#### Group Tag Team Specialists: Robbie E. vs. Davey Richards

Winner advances. They trade armdrags to start and it's an early standoff. Robbie's armbar doesn't work and Davey sends him to the floor, only to have Robbie switch places for a flip dives off the apron. Back in and Davey takes over with a clothesline and inverted Indian deathlock. Robbie fights up with some clotheslines to set up the Boom Drop for a close two, more or less sealing his fate. They trade rollups until Davey stomps onto Robbie's chest for two more. Creeping Death advances Davey at 7:15.

**Rating:** C+. Gah I can't stand Davey Richards. He's fun when he's out there with Edwards but when he gets into that martial arts and LET ME SHOW YOU NINETEEN DIFFERENT WAYS I CAN KICK YOU stuff, he's one of the most annoying guys I've ever seen. Robbie would have been a fun story but we'll go with dull and overrated instead.

#### Group Tag Team Specialists

Matt Hardy – 9 points (0 matches remaining)

Davey Richards – 4 point (0 matches remaining)

Robbie E. – 3 points (0 matches remaining)

Eddie Edwards – 1 point (0 matches remaining)

#### Group Wild Card: Crazy Steve vs. Kenny King

If Steve wins we have another playoff but if King wins, he advances. They start fast and trade armdrags to continue a popular trend tonight. Josh recaps the Menagerie until King elbows Steve in the face to take over. Steve goes up top and honks his horn before a springboard hurricanrana gets two. What appeared to be a Codebreaker is countered into the Royal

Flush to advance King, who I don't think is with the promotion anymore, at 4:29.

**Rating:** F. This is your weekly WHY AM I WATCHING THIS match as Steve is an unfunny comedy guy who is still around for reasons I'll never understand. The only good thing here is the lack of having to watch Aiden O'Shea and Steve again in a playoff. This was the worst division by about a mile and one of the few I actually dreaded.

#### Group Wild Card

Mahabali Shera – 9 points (0 matches remaining)

Kenny King – 6 points (0 matches remaining)

Aiden O'Shea – 3 points (0 matches remaining)

Crazy Steve – 0 points (0 matches remaining)

Aries says Lashley will have to be at his best to win.

Pope gives out more awards:

Move of the Tournament – Sky High to Kenny King

Upset of the Tournament – Brooke b. Gail Kim

Turkey of the Tournament – Grado vs. Rockstar Spud

#### Group Champions: Lashley vs. Austin Aries

Winner advances. Aries bounces off Lashley to start until a missile dropkick staggers Lashley a bit. That's fine with Lashley as he throws Aries away and starts driving shoulders in the corner. Aries knees his way out of a delayed vertical suplex by knocking Lashley down to a knee but Lashley stands back up and suplexes him anyway. That is SCARY power.

Back from a break with Aries elbowing out of Lashley's grip but getting caught in a belly to belly. The spear hits the post though and Aries follows up with a missile dropkick. Lashley slaps him out of the corner though and dead lifts him into a powerslam. I repeat my scary power line.

The Last Chancery doesn't get Aries anywhere so he goes with discus forearm. Lashley again powers out of the brainbuster and throws Aries over his head with a release German.

Aries avoids the spear but Lashley sidesteps the suicide dive. The match comes to a screeching halt as Aries is holding his arm with ninety seconds to go. Lashley finally clotheslines him down again as this thing JUST WON'T END. Aries grabs the Lash Chancery but Lashley makes the rope. Instead of standing around for the last thirty seconds, Aries tries a 450 but eats a spear to send Lashley on at 15:05.

**Rating:** B. At least it went out on a good match, even though Aries got stupid at the end after being smart most of the time. Lashley is the smart choice here since he actually works for TNA, but Aries was a nice surprise. I mean, I'm stupid for realizing he's a surprise according to Josh but he's a lot smarter than me after all.

#### Group Champions

Ethan Carter III – 7 points (0 matches remaining)

Lashley – 6 points (0 matches remaining)

Austin Aries – 4 points (0 matches remaining)

Mr. Anderson – 0 points (0 matches remaining)

We recap the night because just announcing the brackets isn't interesting enough.

Here are the official round of sixteen brackets:

Ethan Carter III

DJZ

Bram

Davey Richards

Lashley

Drew Galloway

Mahabali Shera

Eli Drake

Tigre Uno

Gail Kim

Eric Young

Kenny King

Jesse Godderz

Awesome Kong

Bobby Roode

Matt Hardy

That could be worse, but they've handed Carter a spot in the semifinals.

Ethan Carter III is thrilled with his draw.

DJZ is ready....for the three women he's brought home.

Davey Richards is of course respectful about Bram.

Eli Drake is a smarmy jerk and says he won't be dancing with Shera. I like him more and more every time I hear him talk.

Eric Young IS GOD.

Jesse Godderz isn't worried about any man, woman or Kong.

Bobby Roode says his toughest test is coming.

Matt Hardy thinks no one is stopping him.

**Overall Rating:** C-. THANK GOODNESS! I am so incredibly sick of this tournament and listening to Josh talk about how IT'S SUDDEN DEATH IN THIS

GROUP and having Pope call everyone daddy every ten seconds. I understand that there has been a lot of action in this and some of it has been really good. However, so much of it has been stuff like Jesse vs. Micah or King vs. Steve.

The good is indeed good but this concept going on for two straight months with NOTHING else would drive anyone crazy. If you want to have a tournament then fine, but don't drag it out this long. The good is completely overshadowed by the bad and uninteresting, leaving you with two months of watchable wrestling that is completely wasted because it's the same idea over and over and over. At least it's over now and we can get on to.....the actual tournament.

### Results

Tigre Uno and DJZ b. Manik – Split legged corkscrew moonsault

Drew Galloway b. Rockstar Spud – Claymore

Bram b. Grado – Rollup

Jesse Godderz b. Micah – Adonis crab

Davey Richards b. Robbie E. – Creeping Death

Kenny King b. Crazy Steve – Royal Flush

Lashley b. Austin Aries – Spear

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# Impact Wrestling – October 21, 2015: Why We're Here

## Impact Wrestling

Date: October 21, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

It's week three of the World Title Series and that's really all there is to say. These matches don't have stories and it's too early to make many predictions. Tonight we'll probably start seeing some of the second matches for some of the people, but it's going to be a long time before any of the eight groups start to wrap up. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the events that set up the Series (which seems like a weekly thing) and last week's results.

The announcers recap things up to this point and preview tonight's matches.

Group Champions predict who will go on to the next round. We saw some of this last week so they're already repeating footage. Carter thinks his clone will advance along with him.

### Group Champions: Austin Aries vs. Mr. Anderson

Feeling out process to start as Josh says that tonight's main event is Lashley vs. Anderson. Now I'm pretty sure he meant Ethan Carter III but I'm just an internet nerd who pays attention to the rules so I'm sure that it's just Ethan's aforementioned clone disguised as Anderson and not Josh not being able to read the sheet in front of him properly. We go split screen to hear more from Aries as he misses a missile dropkick back in the ring.

Anderson goes after the arm with some punches to the shoulder and a

quickly broken armbar. Aries comes right back with a slingshot elbow (Pope: "Shades of Austin Starr.") and the announcers discuss Ethan not knowing what independents are. A double cross body puts both guys down and we take a break. Back with Aries flipping over Anderson's back as we hit five minutes left.

Aries sends him to the floor for a suicide dive but Anderson comes back with the Regal Roll for two. Anderson tries another from the middle rope but gets slammed down, setting up the 450 for an even closer near fall. We see Thea getting nervous on the floor. This changes nothing whatsoever but she is in fact there. How very TNA of her.

A spinwheel kick of all things gets a near fall for Anderson and now the middle rope Regal Roll gets the same thing with less than two minutes to go. They fight over finishers for a bit until Aries connects with the discus forearm. The running dropkick staggers Anderson on the top and a super brainbuster kills Anderson dead for the pin at 14:02, eliminating Anderson from the competition.

**Rating:** C+. This took time to get going but picked way up by the end. That super brainbuster looked great and while Aries has almost no chance of advancing to the next round, at least we're getting some good matches. It's good to see someone eliminated early, but due to the format we still have to sit through his mostly meaningless matches due to the nature of the format. That's going to get old fast.

### Group Champions

Austin Aries – 4 points (1 match remaining)

Lashley – 3 points (2 matches remaining)

Ethan Carter III – 1 point (2 matches remaining)

Mr. Anderson – 0 points (1 match remaining)

We'll see the Bound For Glory main event later. You knew this was coming sooner or later.

Video on the X-Division Title match at Bound For Glory.

## Group X-Division: Tigre Uno vs. Mandrews

Tigre doesn't have the X-Division Title with him. Mandrews rides a skateboard to the ring while wearing his hat backwards. So he's a 90s kind of guy. Tigre quickly takes him down to start but they go to a standoff with Mandrews having to explain a fist bump to Uno. Mandrews takes him down and surfs on the champ's back, followed by a standing moonsault for no cover. Josh talks about how someone in the X-Division basically has no chance to ever be World Champion aside from Option C. Thanks for making it clear that the match I'm watching has almost no chance of mattering.

Tigre kicks him to the floor and scores with a baseball slide as Josh breaks down the math on Group Champions while getting in the phrase "playing spoiler" as many times as he can. Back in and Mandrews knocks him to the floor for a flip dive of his own but instead of following up he takes a lap around the ring high fiving fans. Back in Mandrews misses a shooting star and gets German suplexed into the corner. A quick corkscrew splash out of the corner (similar to Starship Pain) gives Tigre the pin at 6:42.

**Rating:** C. This was one of the better X-Division matches in a while as they actually had a bit more time than usual. Tigre is clearly a few steps ahead of everyone else in the division and is the best guy they've had there in a long time, but as Josh said: he has no chance of ever moving up the card and that's almost all there is to it.

## Group X-Division

Tigre Uno – 3 points (2 matches remaining)

DJZ – 0 points (3 matches remaining)

Manik – 0 points (3 matches remaining)

Mandrews – 0 points (2 matches remaining)

Austin Aries says Thea's smile is all the extra motivation he needs.

Pope says you don't want a countout because you want a win. So do



countout wins not get you three points? That's never been made clear.

Here's the main event from Bound For Glory 2015.

### TNA World Title: Matt Hardy vs. Ethan Carter III vs. Drew Galloway

Carter is defending and Jeff Hardy, Carter's former employee, is guest referee. As usual, JB says Drew is standing when he's kneeling. Tyrus tries to cheat thirty seconds in and gets ejected. Matt and Drew take turns punching Ethan in the corner and a clothesline puts the champ on the floor. Drew goes after Matt with some forearms to the back and a big headbutt as Ethan comes back in.

Carter knocks Matt out to the floor and stops to yell at Jeff for no apparent reason. A cravate slows Drew down but they trade cross bodies to drop both guys. Everyone gets back in but Matt and Ethan are quickly on the floor, allowing Drew to hit a big flip dive and take Hardy out. It's table time but Drew picks Ethan up and hits a White Noise onto the steps for a big thud. Matt makes the save and puts Drew on top of Ethan (there's no count for no apparent reason) for a double stack moonsault.

Ethan runs Jeff over by mistake and walks into the Side Effect but there's no one to count. Carter is up first and puts Drew on the table at ringside, only to suplex Matt from the apron through Galloway in a big crash. Back in and a TKO gets two on Matt but Drew comes back in and tries to pull Matt off the top. Hardy headbutts him into the Tree of Woe but Ethan comes of to make it a superplex, only to have Drew do a sit up to add a German superplex in an impressive spot.

Matt and Drew slug it out so Ethan gives them both the 1%er at the same time for two each. The fans aren't even reacting to these near falls and Jeff has barely been a factor so far. Ethan realizes that Jeff needs to get involved so he shoves the referee and demands a DQ. It's No DQ though so Ethan grabs a chair, only to have Jeff take it away. Ethan slaps him again so Jeff lays Carter out with a Twisting Stunner. Drew adds a running boot and Matt hits the Twist of Fate on Drew for the pin and the title at 20:01.

**Rating:** C-. THEY ACTUALLY DID IT! They took the stupidest possible

outcome of the three and actually went with it because TNA really is that stupid. Matt Hardy lost his two title shots, didn't get the pin to get into this match, and then wins the title at 41 years old with help from his more popular brother when you have Drew at 30 and Ethan at 32 right there. Instead though, OLD GUYS RULE!

The Hardy Family celebrates while Ethan goes to the back to yell at Dixie.

Now, that last half hour? None of it matters because the title was vacated less than two days later so forget all this.

Ethan says he's winning the title back for himself and he's going to be lethal against Lashley tonight. It's not over until he wins.

The announcers talk about Group Wild Card.

We get a thirty second clip of Jesse Godderz making Crimson tap out to the Adonis Lock. Yeah they're so strapped for material that they're airing old matches, but to be fair, it's probably better than watching the whole thing.

#### Group Future Four

Jesse Godderz – 3 points (2 matches remaining)

Micah – 0 points (3 matches remaining)

Eli Drake – 0 points (3 matches remaining)

Crimson – 0 points (2 matches remaining)

Jesse gives us a top five list of reasons why he's going to win the World Title Series with #1 being "look at me."

Clips of Micah vs. Eli Drake going to a double countout for 1 point apiece.

#### Group Future Four

Jesse Godderz – 3 points (2 matches remaining)

Micah – 1 point (2 matches remaining)

Eli Drake – 1 point (2 matches remaining)

Crimson – 0 points (2 matches remaining)

The hosts do their swipe right/swipe left game for a few names.

#### Group X-Division: Manik vs. DJZ

The announcers cover the mask being back by saying Manik wants better peripheral vision. Manik works on the arm to start but gets armdragged down a few times. A nice dropkick knocks Manik down again but the announcers would rather talk about Shane Helms (the greatest cruiserweight of all time according to Josh and Pope).

Manik cranks back on the arm again and stomps away before rolling some suplexes. Josh calls Pope referring to a suplex as a souffle the stupidest thing he's ever heard in wrestling. I'd actually think that was calling your fans a bunch of internet nerds but what do I know. A quick backbreaker gets two for DJZ but he dives into two boots to the ribs. Manik misses a frog splash but comes right back with something like a GTS but with a kick instead of knee for the pin at 6:49.

**Rating:** C-. Nothing much to see here but that's the case for so many X-Division matches these days. Both guys are fine in the ring, which is something I never thought I'd say about DJZ. Manik is a guy who could be something interesting if they would just let him be himself, but that might come too close to a personality in the division and that's not going to happen anytime soon.

#### Group X-Division

Tigre Uno – 3 points (2 matches remaining)

Manik – 3 points (2 matches remaining)

DJZ – 0 points (2 matches remaining)

Mandrews – 0 points (2 matches remaining)

Clip of Carter vs. Lashley from over the summer.

### Group Champions: Lashley vs. Ethan Carter III

Carter hides in the corner and then on the floor for the first two minutes. Lashley finally gets his hands on him and scores with some running shoulders to the ribs. A clothesline puts Carter on the floor and we take a break. Back with Lashley following Carter to the floor, only to get clubbed in the back and sent into the steps.

Carter dives into a spinebuster on the floor but Tyrus posts Lashley to keep his boss in it. They get back inside but Carter sends Lashley right back to the floor for a slam from Tyrus. We're under five minutes to go as Carter puts on a camel clutch. That goes nowhere and they're both down again. An eye rake gets Carter out of a torture rack so Lashley powerslams him down and grabs a rear naked choke. Tyrus helps out again for the save and it's a Stinger Splash from Carter.

We've got two minutes to go as Lashley scores with a powerbomb, followed by the spear. Tyrus pulls Lashley to the floor though, giving Ethan time to kick out. This time Tyrus just gets in the ring but gets speared down, allowing Carter to grab a chair (just like he did over the summer). Lashley blocks it but gets kicked low, setting up the 1%er for the pin on Lashley at 15:40.

**Rating:** C+. Another nice match here to close out the show which is always a nice bonus. Carter winning makes sense and is likely letting him move on to the next round. Odds are Lashley beats Aries whenever they finally get around to that match, setting up the two winners for the group. Tyrus got a bit annoying here but that's his job. Well that and being #1 contender for reasons I don't want to understand.

### Group Champions

Austin Aries – 4 points (1 match remaining)

Ethan Carter III – 4 point (1 match remaining)

Lashley – 3 points (1 match remaining)

Mr. Anderson – 0 points (1 match remaining)

**Overall Rating:** C. The show was again fine but again nothing I needed to see. The big lesson I've gotten from the first three weeks and just over 1/3 of the qualifying matches is that this really needed to be a field of just sixteen. There are so many people in it that are just there to fill in spots and you can tell who is most likely to advance out of each group pretty easily.

I'm glad they're starting to just air clips of some of them though as it's going to make this a lot easier to sit through. The Series has been far better than I was expecting, but it's still not the most interesting thing in the world when this whole thing is a big qualifier for another tournament with no stories going on during the eight to ten weeks of the pool play. This show had some of the bigger names though and it definitely made things more entertaining, at least for a night.

### Results

Austin Aries b. Mr. Anderson – Super brainbuster

Tigre Uno b. Mandrews – Corkscrew splash

Manik b. DJZ – Kick to the head

Ethan Carter III b. Lashley – 1%er

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